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ABSTRACT

This case study describes the evolution of a center of pedagogy in El Paso, Texas, to prepare teachers in and for exemplary schools, sustain dialogue among partners, pursue the center's agenda, and critique and revise the undertaking. The paper provides a historical context, examining the role of state public policy and outside grant funding and describing the developmental process. A collaboration was created between the University of Texas El Paso and the El Paso public schools to design and implement a field-based, community-oriented, outcome-based teacher education program. The state's vision was to create educators who would establish schools as democratic learning centers where children could acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing, democratic citizens. Content and teaching standards for new and beginning teachers and revised certification frameworks were developed. Interdisciplinary faculty collaborated on external grant funding. The U.S. Department of Education funded the "Partnership for Teacher Quality and Quantity in El Paso" grant. A major activity of that grant was establishing the University Center for Teacher Preparation (a center of pedagogy). This center is not a physical location but a concept with a consensual framework supported by dedicated educators and leaders within the community. (SM)

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CASE STUDY: THE EVOLUTION OF A CENTER OF PEDAGOGY

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CASE STUDY: THE EVOLUTION OF A CENTER OF PEDAGOGY

> The formulation of school policy should be a cooperative process capitalizing on the intellectual resources of the whole school staff. This participation in the development of educational policy should not be thought of as a favor granted by the administration but rather as a right and obligation... This procedure promotes efficiency through individual understanding of policies and through the acceptance of joint responsibility for carrying them into effect. What is far more important, it provides a democratic process through which growth in service is promoted and the school service itself profits from the application of heightened morale and of group thinking to school problems. It makes the school in reality a unit of democracy in its task of preparing citizens for our democratic society (Educational Policies Commission, 1938, pp 67-68).

As the opening quote shows, more than sixty years ago educators understood that formulation of school policy should be a cooperative process and joint responsibility to best prepare citizens for life in a social and political democracy. At the PK-12 level this understanding is implemented in many campuses across the nation. However at the teacher preparation level, formulation of policy and responsibility remains fragmented and in the hands of disconnected constituencies. Decisions regarding standards, teaching and learning, and assessment are made in colleges of education, arts and sciences, by mentor teachers and building administrators, and by regulatory agencies - most often independently of one another.

Theoretical Foundation

Since 1986, educators in the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) have been engaged in the simultaneous renewal of teacher preparation and public schools. These collaborative efforts in pursuit of systemic, simultaneous renewal of

education, while effective, face challenges of sustainability and institutionalization. In light of these challenges and in order to maintain effective collaboration, many educators now advocate the need for a tripartite governance structure in which a common culture can be fostered. John Goodlad (1990) in *Teachers for Our Nation's Schools* proposed that centers of pedagogy, which emphasize inquiry about teaching and learning, will foster the environment necessary to create a governance structure for the ongoing simultaneous renewal of both schools and the education of educators. "It is a setting that brings together and blends harmoniously and coherently the three essential ingredients of a teacher's education: general, liberal education; the study of educational practices; and the guided exercise of the art, science, and skill of teaching" (Goodlad, 1994, pg. 2). In this setting tripartite representatives "share in planning the whole of a program, not a piece of it" (Goodlad, 1990, pg. 352). The mission and purposes of a center of pedagogy are to:

- Prepare teachers in and for exemplary schools.
- Sustain dialogue among the partners.
- Pursue the Center's agenda as identified above.
- Critique and revise the undertaking.

The following case study describes the evolution of a center of pedagogy in El Paso.

Case Studies

Case study research inquires into a current phenomenon in its actual context. It is an examination of one setting or a single subject (Merriam, 1988). Case study inquiry helps us understand the phenomenon by providing answers to "how" and "why" questions. Case studies are particularly relevant to document and better understand systemic change efforts (Mantle-Bromley, 2000). Yin (1994) suggests case study research is well-suited

when:

- Boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are unclear.
- Findings from the case cannot be generalized to other cases but is generalizable to theory.
- The case is in some way exemplary.

Studying the evolution of the El Paso center of pedagogy in context will help us understand how centers can be developed and why they are needed. The center is the result of a decade of systemic change efforts. The boundaries between the actual center and the larger context are ambiguous. Findings from this case may be generalized and related to Goodlad's proposals about the need for centers of pedagogy as new governance structures for educator preparation and simultaneous renewal. The El Paso center is exemplary in that it engages the tripartite faculty (public schools, colleges of education, and arts/science) effectively and has expanded the concept to include community college faculty and the larger social and business community.

We begin this case study by providing a historical context that includes the role of state public policy and the role of outside funding through grants. Next, developmental progress is described. Finally, findings from this case study are considered in light of Goodlad's ideas. We consider how and why the findings support theory and/or contradict it.

Historical Background

In 1992, the College of Education at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), recognizing a need for improving the academic achievement of students in the El Paso area, became involved in an ongoing major simultaneous renewal effort. Foundational were the ideas that: better teachers will lead to better schools, the renewal of teacher preparation and public schools should be simultaneous, teacher education is

the business of arts and sciences faculty in partnership with education faculty, parents and the community at-large are key players.

Individual faculty had been engaged in collaborative partnerships with parents and schools for a number of years. For example, the nationally recognized Mother-Daughter Program, several Title VII Bilingual Education grants and TEA Academics 2000 Reading Improvement grant funded projects. Thus the move toward a county-wide partnership was a natural one for some UTEP faculty – it was a major challenge for some others.

The dean and the faculty of the College understood that renewal would work best within a framework of current practice and the evolving theories of educational leaders. The first step in the process was the submission of an application to join the NNER in October1992, with acceptance as a member occurring in November. This was the beginning of a work-in-progress that would lead toward increased quality and quantity of educators in El Paso with the primary goal of enhancing educational achievement from early childhood through graduate school.

Role of State Policies.

1. Centers for Professional Development and Technology. In accordance with the foregoing objective the Department of Teacher Education at UTEP began to formulate the steps necessary to restructure the teacher preparation program. Fortuitously in 1993, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) launched an initiative to develop and fund Centers of Professional Development and Technology (CPDT). The following features characterized this new approach to teacher preparation:

- Pre-service teacher education is collaboratively designed and managed.
- Teacher preparation is field-based taking place in professional

development school classrooms.

- The integration of technology and effective teaching receives high priority.
- The quality and relevance of staff development receives high priority.
- Alternative assessment methods are utilized to evaluate student progress.
- A parent-engagement component is included.

TEA's goals nicely matched the College's vision which was molded on the NNER's agenda for education in a democracy. The vision and agenda anchors the mission of educator preparation on the moral dimensions of teaching: enculturating the young in a democracy, providing access to knowledge for all students, engaging in a nurturing pedagogy, and serving as stewards of schools.

Therefore, a proposal to support the development of an effective collaboration between UTEP and El Paso public school partners to design and implement "a field-based, community-oriented, outcome-based teacher education program"(CDPT Grant Proposal, 13.02) was written. The intention of the CDPT was to "improve the quality of teachers in El Paso and Hudspeth counties in ways that will increase academic achievement among our diverse student population" (CDPT Grant Proposal, 13.02). In 1993 the College of Education was awarded approximately $2.7 million to implement the proposed Center for Professional Development and Technology. The CDPT advanced the agenda of both the UTEP College of Education and the NNER, and was consistent with the Texas Legislature initiative, to improve the quality of teacher education in Texas. This center, with its collaboratively designed structure, established a close approximation of the larger vision held by Goodlad for centers of pedagogy, a vision that key players in the advancement of teacher education in El Paso are working toward but in a manner that is consistent with the diverse culture, experiences, and needs of the El Paso community. The ongoing work, along with the strides made possible through the CDPT

have assisted in laying a strong foundation for, and proof positive that changes within any teacher education program requires collaboration by all key players. Two other Technology Innovation Challenge Grants were awarded by the U.S. Department of Education in 1995 ($3.4 million) and 1998 ($9.9 million) to continue the implementation of CPDT and enhance the technology infrastructure and professional development of teachers in the Partner Schools.

2. State Board of Educator Certification. In 1995, the Texas Legislature established The State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) to acknowledge "public school educators as professionals and grant educators the authority to govern the standards of their profession" (SBEC, http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/brdagenrule/members.htm). The Dean of the UTEP College of Education and Director of the CPDT, was the first college dean appointed by the governor to the original board, which "oversees all aspects of the preparation, certification, and standards of conduct of public school educators" (SBEC, http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/brdagenrule/members.htm).

The state's vision of creating educators who would establish schools as democratic learning centers where the children of Texas could acquire the knowledge and skills that would prepare them to be contributory, democratic citizens had been a compelling force driving UTEP's education renewal. The steps taken by the legislature created a new congruency between the visions of the NNER, UTEP's College of Education, and the state. The strategic plans to enrich the teacher preparation program at UTEP were now supported by an integrated linkage of state agencies, SBEC and TEA.

The State's move to standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment for public schools and teacher preparation institutions was preceded by development of El Paso K-12 standards, an effort led by the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence. Within the College of Education there was an accompanying determination to internalize accountability for the education of educators through standards-based teaching and learning.

3. Texas Standards for New and Beginning Teachers and Certification Frameworks. SBEC developed content and teaching standards for new and beginning teachers and revised certification frameworks to be effective fall 2002. Creating standards-based degree plans and courses to prepare primary grades and middle grades teachers served as a catalyst in El Paso to bring key faculty from the Colleges of Education, Liberal Arts, and Science, and public schools together. Representatives participated in a December 2000 retreat and frequent follow-up meetings for the next year and a half. The conversations throughout focused on defining a portrait of a well-educated teacher for the region. Task groups were created to develop degree plans that would simultaneously address state standards and certification frameworks while remaining true to the defined portrait of well-educated teachers for El Paso. Once again state policy worked as an external force to move the local agenda.

4. State Certification Examinations. It was clear to participants at the December 2000 retreat and the working task groups that the performance of students on the Examination for Certification of Educators in Texas (ExCET) was declining. By summer 2001 scores in some demographic groups were low enough that the institution's

accreditation came under review by SBEC. This added impetus to the work of developing standards-based degree plans and programs. As faculty across disciplines at UTEP and El Paso Community College began to refit courses, understanding of the shared vision of quality educators for El Paso school children grew.

The Role of External Grants

While the "complete revamping" of the teacher preparation program was occurring in-house, the very difficult task of stimulating conversation between College of Education faculty and faculty in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the public schools was rapidly being recognized as a key success factor in teacher preparedness. Therefore, the Deans of the Colleges Education, Liberal Arts, and Science began serious conversations that lead to greater recognition of the shared role each played in teacher education. Collaboration between the Colleges of Education and Science led to a $5 million National Science Foundation grant, Partnership for Excellence in Teacher Education (PETE) which was funded in 1995 and designated for the purpose of improving the pre-service education of math and science teachers.

Following PETE, an opportunity for the formation of an alliance between College of Education faculty and College of Liberal Arts faculty arose. This time the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant provided funding to sustain the effort of improving teacher preparedness. This grant provided funding for faculty representatives from both colleges to examine individual and the departmental roles of each in the preparation of teachers. Once again, the renewal of teacher preparation was expanded by joint participation in which participants became more knowledgeable in the responsibility of their department and its contributions to teacher education.

A third opportunity for collaboration emerged, this time involving faculty and administrators from all three colleges – Education, Science, and Liberal Arts. This opportunity came in the form of a yearlong Institute for Educational Renewal that was funded by a DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Incentive Award. The three colleges recognized that previous attitudes toward teacher education and teacher preparedness goals were defined in unirational terms, but this, and prior, collaborative efforts were redressing these terms and creating a teacher education system that would be guided by coherent goals and objectives in accordance with the simultaneous renewal of teacher preparedness and schools. The yearlong institute was implemented by five "graduates" of the Institute for Educational Inquiry, and the participants were senior administrators and faculty members from the Colleges of Education, Science, and Liberal Arts, public school administrators and teachers from the El Paso area, and members of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence (Pacheco, 1999, p.145, 165).

This Institute was structured so that participants were involved in discussions centered around shared readings that explored "the role of schools and universities in a democracy, the preparation of teachers, the moral responsibility of teachers, the problems of access to knowledge, and the need for simultaneous renewal of the public schools and programs that prepare teachers" (Patterson, Michelli, & Pacheco, 1999, p.166). The intended result was to advance the simultaneous renewal agenda through the engagement of Liberal Arts and Science faculty and public school faculty, all of whom have been recognized as critical components in the renewal effort. These conversations were envisaged as the early stages of future discussions that would result in the development of a Center of Pedagogy in El Paso.

Subsequently, the Chair of the Department of Teacher Education, and the Deans of Education, Liberal Arts, and Science, wrote a proposal, "Partnership for Teacher Quality and Quantity in El Paso," which was funded by the U.S. Department of Education Title II program in 2001. The $4 million dollar Partnership grant combined with $384,000 from the Meadows Foundation allowed UTEP Colleges, El Paso Community College, three urban and six rural school districts – totaling over 155,000 students, the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, and the Region 19 Education Service Center to establish a program to improve recruitment, preparation, and retention of new teachers and to institutionalize and sustain education renewal.

An El Paso Center of Pedagogy

A major activity of the Partnership Grant is the establishment of a University Center for Teacher Preparation – a center of pedagogy.

In order to augment the current concepts and practices of a Center of Pedagogy all participants recognize that absolute commitment "involves giving up complete power and control over one's own turf in the name of a greater common good....a governance structure, fashioned in response to both the historical and social contexts of the specific setting, will have to be developed to guarantee these conditions" (Pacheco, 1999, p.).

The planned El Paso center will be structured with no superior individual or group dominating the others. The vision was for it to be an organization where stakeholders proceed together towards the common goal of simultaneous renewal of public schools and education of educators.

Moving From Vision to Reality

In 2000-2001, the Dean of Liberal Arts, an Associate Dean of Education, and the

Partnership Grant Recruitment Coordinator participated in a yearlong Leadership Institute at the Institute of Educational Inquiry with John Goodland and senior associates. The Leadership Institute focused on two themes: (1) what does a well-educated teacher need to know and be able to do and (2) a group case study inquiry project. Building on the foundation laid over the past decade, it was a logical next step to connect the Institute themes to the El Paso agenda and push the work of creating a center of pedagogy.

Partners began a continuing literature review of existing centers of pedagogy. This review revealed that, at present, theoretical and practical studies, and evaluations, are limited. A number of "center-like" structures are in place around the country. However, we could identify only two centers of pedagogy that include most of the components envisioned in Goodlad's writing. Those sites are, not surprisingly, both members of the NNER: Montclair State University (MSU) and Brigham Young University (BYU). Both of which are structured with tripartite governance and founded on Goodlad's principles. The Centers at MSU and BYU have made significant contributions to the field.

However, the El Paso Center would expand governance and responsibility beyond the tripartite of colleges of education, colleges of arts and science, and the public schools. The community's business leaders, parents, faith-based organizations, and the community college are key in our context. This expansion raises new challenges.

With thorough evaluation of the local context, the strategies necessary to develop a center of pedagogy could be determined, and necessary changes to the basic suggested structure implemented. In order to develop these strategies an initial planning meeting was held in November 2000 which included Partnership representatives. In addition an

NNER Senior Associate attended to offer guidance. The work of building and shaping a center on the strong foundation laid in El Paso over the past ten years was expected to continue for the next four years of the Partnership.

All of the foregoing have functioned as building blocks for an El Paso center of pedagogy by laying a foundation composed of the four necessary components of any center: "(1) development of a shared mission and responsibility common to the tripartite partnership, (2) achievement of levels of trust among the stakeholders, (3) development of a common decision-making or governance structure, and (4) dedication of significant funding for the building of collaboration and implementing of centers of pedagogy" (Patterson, Michelli, & Pacheco, 1999, p.176).

In July 2001, with support from the Partnership Grant, another series of local leadership institutes was begun which will continue over the next four years. The participants included deans and key faculty from UTEP colleges, El Paso Community College deans, public school superintendents, representatives of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, and a member of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Participants spent two and a half days building a culture of inquiry through conversations centered on common readings and through the exploration of the realms of responsibility for the education of educators. Consensus was reached that the first two components of a center were now in place. The last two components have been in place for some time through the CPDT and external grant funds.

Findings

Institute participants came together committed to continued education renewal

including the creation of a new governance structure for educator preparation and realized by the end of the second session that the components of a center of pedagogy are in place. We are preparing teachers in and for exemplary schools, dialogue has been sustained among partners for a decade, tripartite representatives are engaged in planning the whole program, and the work of critiquing and revising the undertaking is continuous. A suggestion was made that the time has come to hold a "constitutional convention" in El Paso to formalize a center of pedagogy. Another suggestion was simply to hang a sign naming and claiming the existence of the El Paso Center of Pedagogy.

The El Paso center of pedagogy is not a physical location; it is a concept with a consensual framework supported by dedicated educators and leaders in this community. The center as a work-in-progress will continue to provide the structure for shared governance of educator preparation, joint inquiry, and support for the moral dimensions of teaching.

Generalizing From the Case to Theory

The evolution of this center of pedagogy validates Goodlad's theoretical framework that centers as settings that emphasize inquiry about teaching and learning will foster the environment necessary to create a governance structure for the ongoing simultaneous renewal of both schools and the education of educators. However, three themes emerged in the case study that were not a part of Goodlad's theory. One, the original tripartite (schools of education, arts and sciences, and public schools) was extended to include community college and the community at large (parents, business and industry, and faith-based organizations). That was important in the El Paso context and we suggest it is likely important in other communities. Two, state policies can have

major impact. For that impact to be positive, as it was in the case described, educators must be engaged in and help shape those policies. Three, serious educational renewal requires serious financial support. The role of external funding was a major enabling factor.

Conclusions, Final Thoughts

Sixty years ago educators understood that formulation of education policy should be a cooperative process and joint responsibility to best prepare citizens for life in a democracy. The research and theoretical work of John I. Goodlad has provided a framework on which to develop cooperative processes and joint responsibility.

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